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No. 6  
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**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Subscription price, \$1.00 a year, in advance, postpaid to any address in the United States or Canada; to foreign countries in the Postal Union, \$1.50. Single copies, 10 cents. Subscriptions may begin with any issue, but as each yearly volume of the magazine commences with the January number, and as index-pages, bindings, etc., are prepared for complete volumes, intending subscribers are advised to date their subscriptions from January.

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PUBLIC FOUNTAINS  
IN ITALY



# THE BROCHURE SERIES

OF ARCHITECTURAL ILLUSTRATION

VOL. 9

JULY, 1903

NO. 7

## PUBLIC FOUNTAINS IN ITALY

IT is not surprising that a thing so beneficent as a spring of water should be connected with religion, and among the early Greeks such springs were commonly enshrined in temples, and dedicated to gods and goddesses, nymphs and heroes; so that we may clearly trace the beginnings of the architectural adornment of fountains from the Greek shrines built over favored sources.

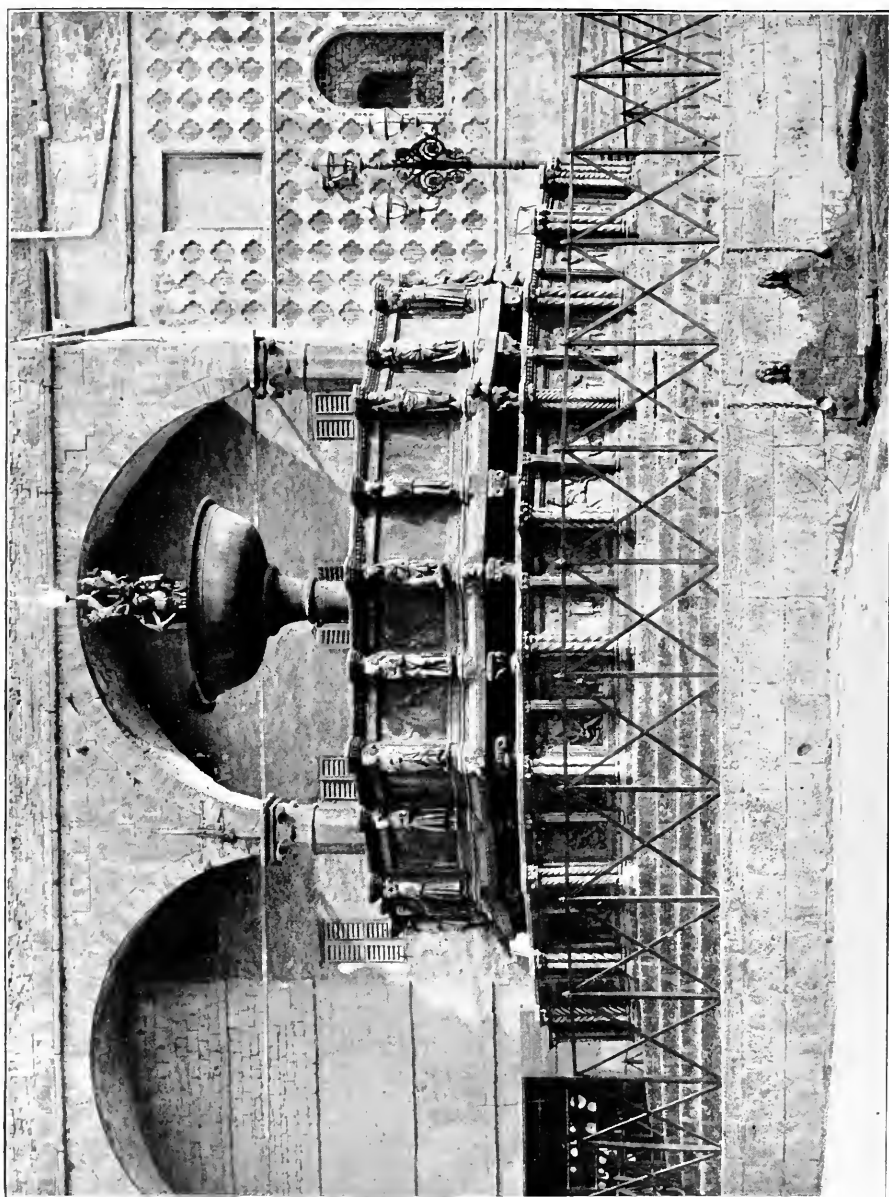
We lack any very definite descriptions of these early fountain-temples, but their elaborate construction is evident from

the brief mentions made of them. The Spring of Pirene at Corinth, for instance, a city of many fountains, was surrounded, we are told, by "white stone" from which the pleasant water flowed from a number of outlets into an open basin; and at the spring near the statue of Bellerophon the water jutted from the hoofs of the winged horse, Pegasus. Another Corinthian spring was adorned by a bronze statue of Neptune standing on a dolphin from the mouth of which the water flowed. A



FOUNTAIN OF THE TORTOISES

ROME



GREAT FOUNTAIN, PIAZZA DEL DUOMO

fountain built by Theagenes at Megara, was remarkable for its size and decoration; and one at Lerna was surrounded by pillars within the enclosure of which a number of seats formed pleasant resting places in the heat of the summer.

religious associations with its sources, the Greeks clearly recognized the necessity to man of wholesome water, and of its transportation and distribution in constancy, purity and plenty throughout the populous quarters of the cities; so



FOUNTAIN OF SEPALI

VITERBO

We know too that a fountain at Patræ was reached from without by flights of descending steps; and that the water flowed from the fountain of Enneakrounos at Athens through nine pipes.

Indeed it is evident that, long before they had outgrown their primitive

that it is not surprising to find Pausanias naming the presence of fountains as a test of civilization, and asking with reference to Panopeus, if it could be properly entitled to rank as a city when it had no public fountains of water.

As to the Romans, one of the greatest



FOUNTAIN, PIAZZA VITTORIO EMANUELE

VITERBO



FOUNTAIN OF THE ROYAL PALACE

CASERTA

manifestations of their practical power was in the arrangements they made for the water supply of the Capital, and the

more important subject cities. The remains of the aqueducts which stretch across the Campagna are amongst the



FOUNTAIN OF THE ROYAL PALACE

CASERTA



FOUNTAIN, PIAZZA DI S. PIETRO

ROME

most striking monuments in Italy; and the importance which the Romans attached to the subject is attested by the minute particulars given by Vitruvius of the methods they employed in the discovery, testing and distribution of water, and their investigations into the medicinal properties of different springs.

The great aqueducts fed the baths and fountains of Rome; and though there were a few private water-pipes (from the renting of which the city derived considerable revenue), the majority of the people obtained their water from the public fountains, as the poorer classes in Italy still do today. In Rome, therefore, fountains must have been large and very numerous, and we know from ancient writers that they were considered important architectural features of the city, and were often elaborately decorated with sculptures and bas-reliefs. We know, too, that fountains were a common adornment of suburban Roman villas and country houses, and that in such private fountains the water often fell from a high

jet into a large marble basin with, at times, a second fall into a still lower receptacle, much after a usual modern form of arrangement.

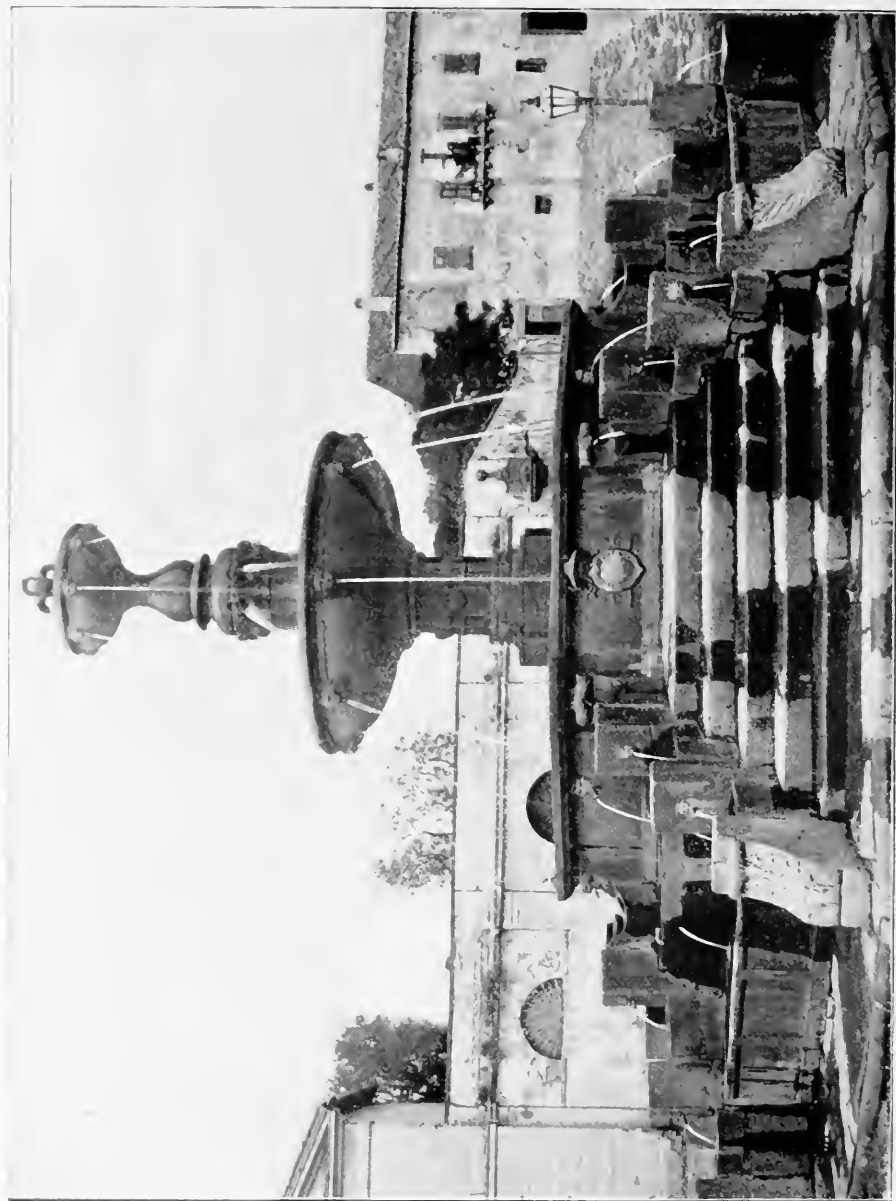
Among the relics at Pompeii (to which we are indebted for so many details of specific knowledge concerning the customs and works of the ancients) not the least interesting are the numerous public and private fountains, supplied by leaden water-pipes from the main reservoirs; the private ones elaborately decorated and beautified with bronze and marble figures or mosaic work, while those for public use were situated in almost all the open spaces and cross-ways of the city, the water spouting through the mouths of human or animal heads set into a wall, and falling into a basin beneath, or rising from some architectural setting in a *jet d'eau*, as at the eastern end of the peristyle of the Fullonica.

The Italians came therefore by natural inheritance to delight in fountains; and there is no country richer in them, either of medieval or modern construction.



FOUNTAIN, PIAZZA DELLA MADONNA

LORETO



FOUNTAIN, PIAZZA DELLA ROCCA

They form one of the most characteristic features of Italy, and memories of them dwell long among the traveler's impressions. "What fascinating visions," says a recent writer, "the very

perhaps seen through slender columns against a background of intricately interwoven design, where the water, after escaping from the jets, flows with gentle lapses along conduits of marble

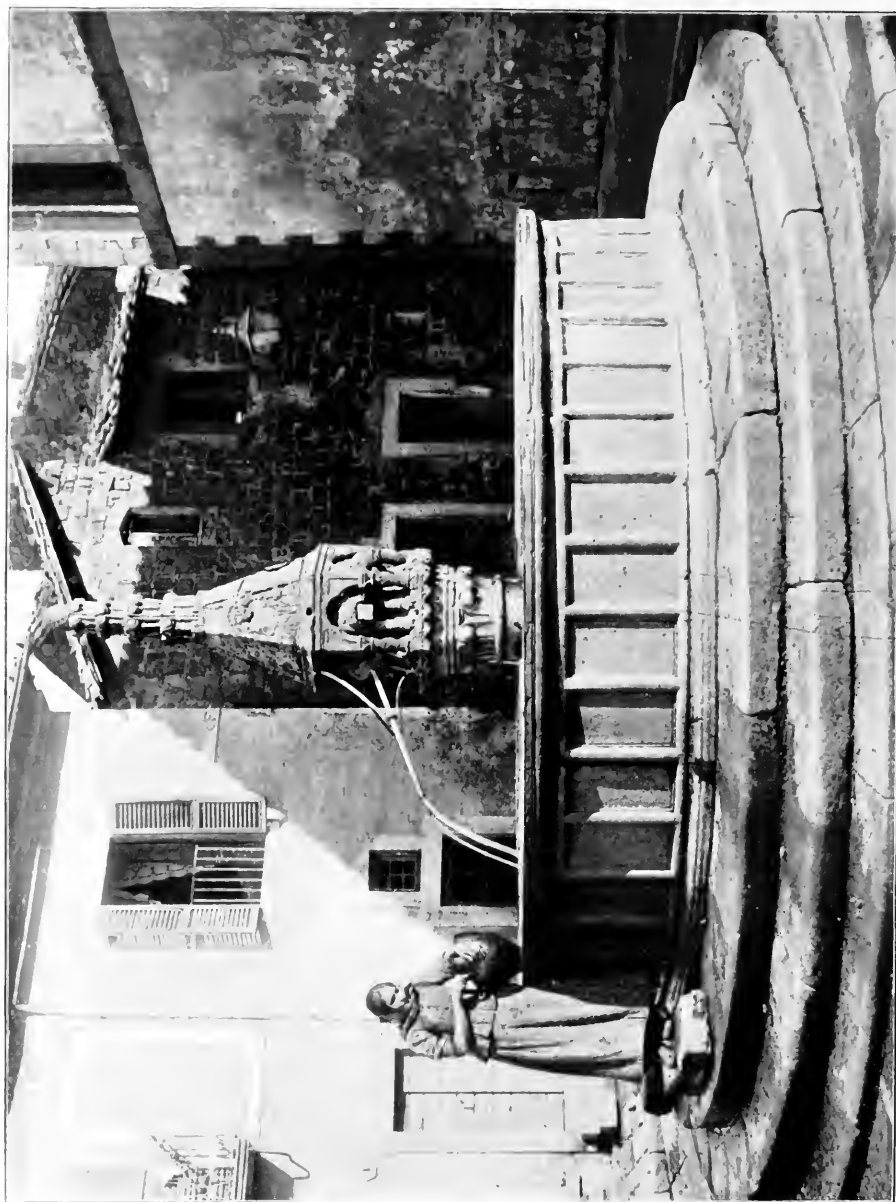


FOUNTAIN OF THE OCEAN, BOBOLI GARDENS

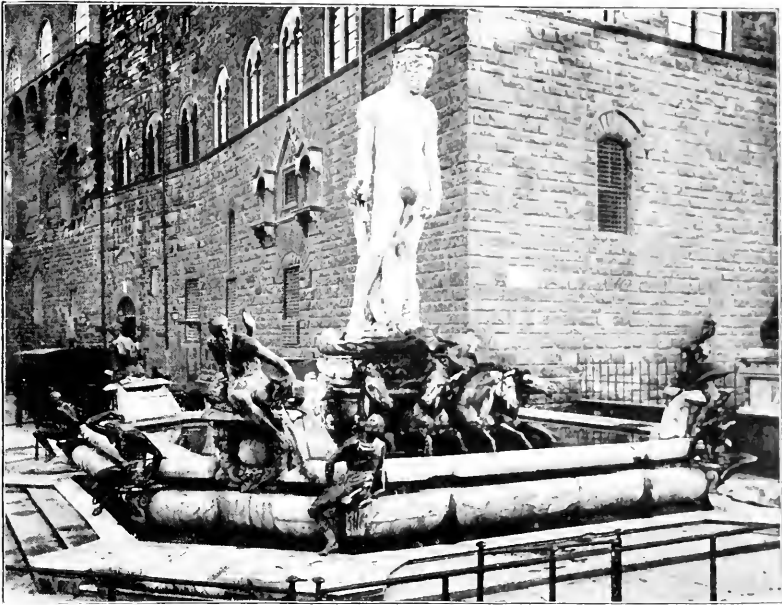
FLORENCE

phrase 'Italian Fountains' suggests to the imagination, which forthwith unrolls before the inner eye in long sequence a chain of delightful memories! Visions of sparkling water and lucent marble,

between beds of flowers; or as in the grandiose later-Renaissance fountains, where tritons wind their conches with swelling cheeks, and nymph and naiad enring the chariot of Neptune drawn



FONTAIN, PIAZZA DELLA MORTE



FOUNTAIN OF NEPTUNE, PIAZZA DELLA SIGNORIA

FLORENCE

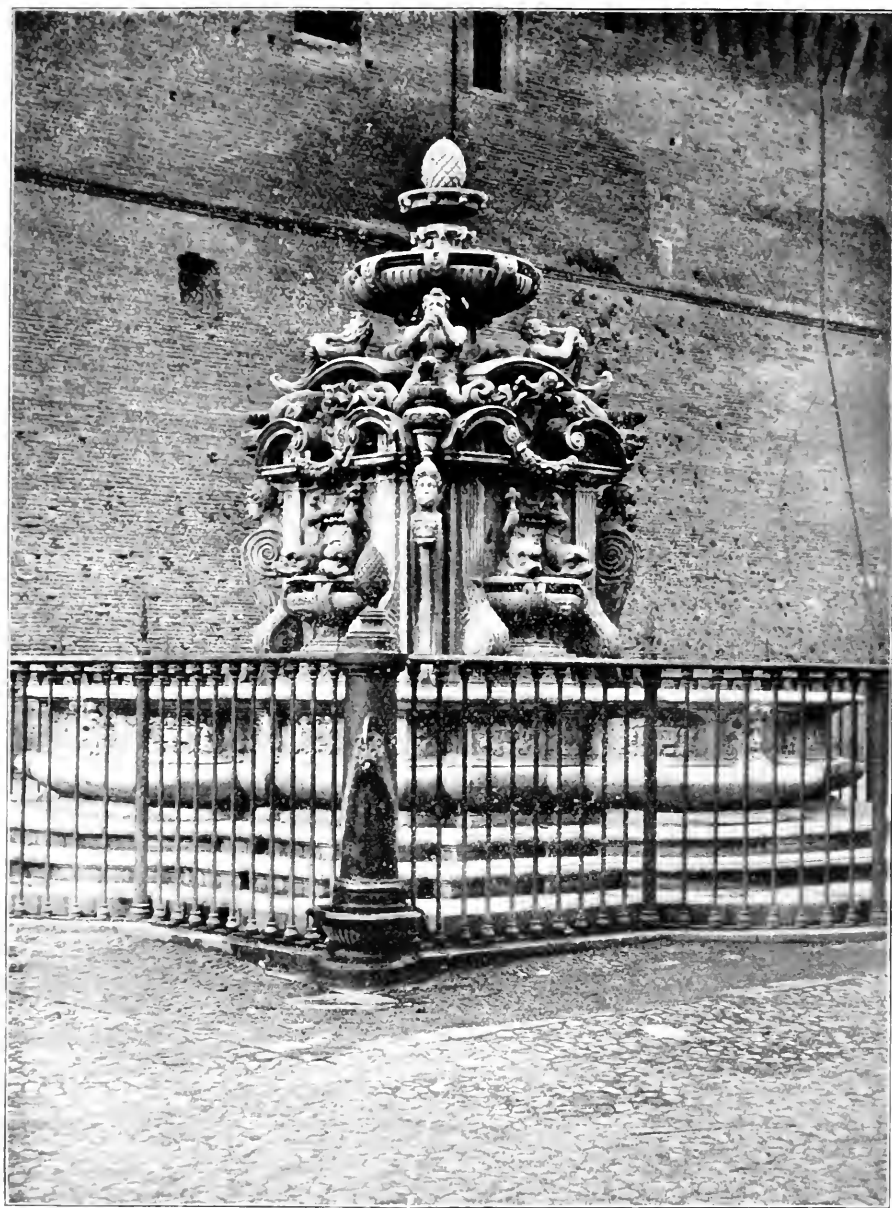
by strange sea-beasts; or, again, where gods and goddesses attitudinise with fluttering draperies above the place

where the water spouts forth in ceaseless flood with a noise as of a cascade; or where the simple basin without orna-



FONTE GAJA, PIAZZA VITTORIO EMANUELE

SIENA



FOUNTAIN, PIAZZA VITTORIO EMANUELE

CESENA

ment, moss-grown and water-stained, overflows with noiseless trickle beneath the shade of the ilex trees; basins of quaint shapes and unfamiliar material and appearance, supported by single figures or groups; designs so informal as to be almost licentious, or so purely architectural as to be a trifle frigid; broadly spreading surfaces of lovely marble chequered with shadow from overhanging trees, or elaborate pieces of interwoven metal-work standing boldly out in the market-place. All these, and many more, pass before the mind in endless panorama, while one almost seems to hear the jingle of the bells as the horses or mules shake their heads and plunge their noses in the cool water with which man and beast wash the dust from their parched throats; or the chatter of the women as they linger, bright spots of color with kerchief and apron, and the tinkle of the water as the water-pots fill; while pigeons flutter and splash in the upper basin, or circle round on widespread pinions, waiting till the fountain be again left solitary."

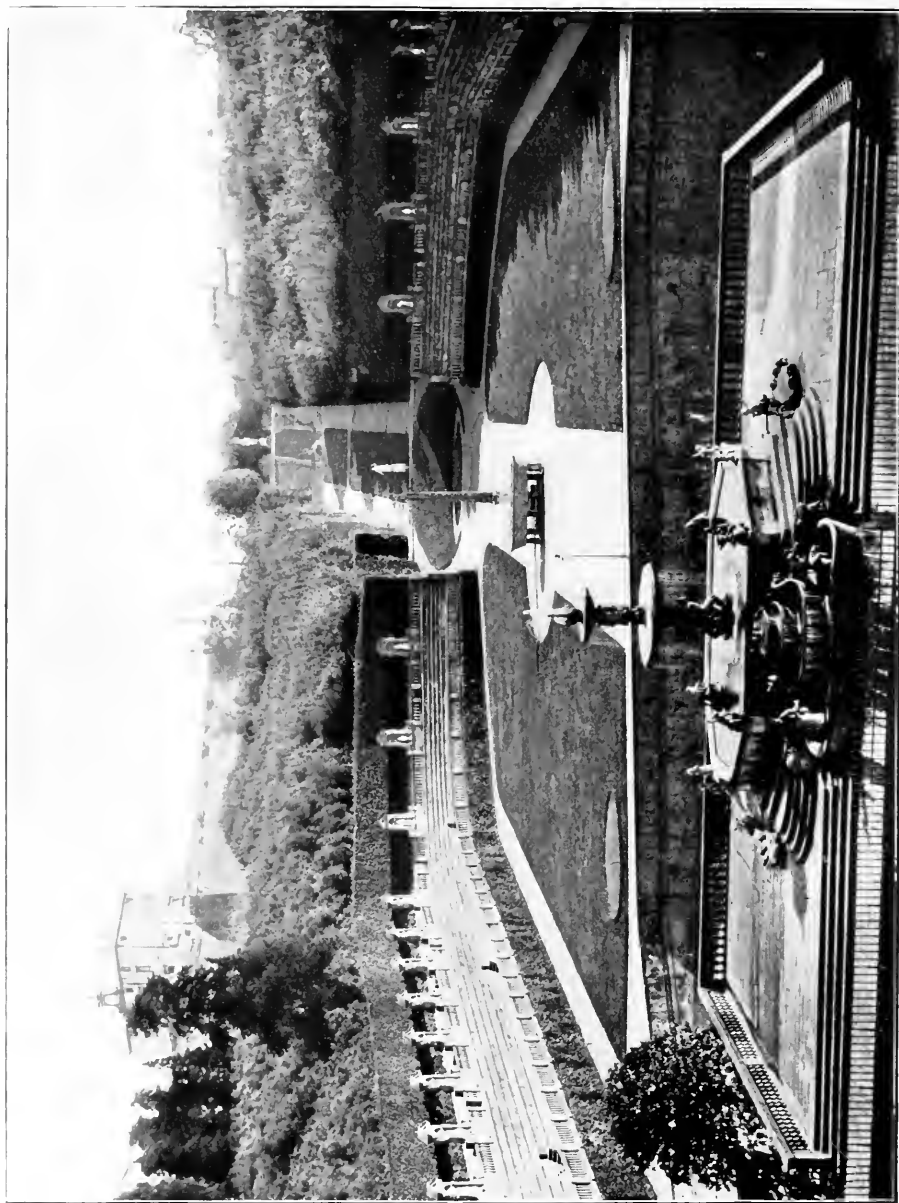
Writers on architecture have made numerous attempts to classify fountains into more specific categories than those afforded by the broad general divisions of the architectural styles; but no such attempt has proved at all conclusive. The features of which fountains may be composed are so many, and the ways in which these features may be combined are so various, that it is more likely that any given example, other than the very simplest, will fall between two such classifications than fit completely within the bounds of any rigid definition of a type. No classification has, therefore, been attempted in the present paper; the subsequent brief descriptions merely follow the order of the illustrations.

The Fountain of the Tortoises, with its graceful design of bronze youths, tortoises and dolphins, is one of the most charming in Rome. Indeed, it is not surprising that the design was for long attributed to Raphael, although actually it is the work of Giacomo della Porta, an architect who did much work in Rome.



FOUNTAIN OF THE FOUR RIVERS, PIAZZA NAVONA

ROME



FOUNTAIN BEHIND THE PITTI PALACE

The Great Fountain in the Piazza del Duomo at Perugia, dates from 1277. It, with its three admirable basins adorned with biblical and allegorical reliefs, is perhaps the most beautiful medieval fountain which has come down to us. An inscription states that it was completed in 1280; and its beauty is not to be wondered at, considering that it was the work of Niccolò and Giovanni Pisano and Arnolfo di Cambio.

The Fountain of Sepali, at Viterbo, was erected in the Gothic style in 1206, and is unusually fine even for Viterbo—a town celebrated for its fountains, and called by the Italians "the city of beautiful women and beautiful fountains." The name "Sepali" is said to be a corruption of *senza pari*, meaning "without equal."

Another fountain at Viterbo, of great distinction of general design, although clumsy in some of its proportions, is that in the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele. The beautiful gardens of the Royal Palace at Caserta, which were built in 1752 by Charles III., contain a series of fountains, of which two are shown in our plates. The rather complex groups of statuary, which represent various classic myths (that shown in our plate represents Acteon being pulled down by Diana's hounds), are the least satisfactory portions of the whole. The fountain was designed jointly by Vanvitelli, Violani and Brunelli.

The simple, and beautiful fountain in the Piazza di S. Pietro in Rome, was designed by Stefano Maderna.

The fountain of unusual design in the Piazza della Rocca at Viterbo is ascribed to Vignola.

The statues of the Fountain of the Ocean in the Boboli Gardens, Florence, are by Giovanni da Bologna.

The Gothic Fountain of the Piazza della Morte, in Viterbo, shows the same breadth of style as the others in this town, distinguished by that quality from the Gothic fountains of more northern Italian cities.

In the Fountain of Neptune, Florence, the bronze sea-horses by Giovanni da Bologna, are entirely overwhelmed by a clumsy and inartistic statue of Neptune carved by Ammanati, the disciple of Michelangelo. This figure was ridiculed by the Florentines from the first, and they have a versified saying concerning it: "Ammanati, Ammanati, you have ruined a fine block of marble."

The celebrated Fonte Gaja in Siena, though not particularly interesting in general form, is one of the masterpieces



FOUNTAIN, PALAZZO VECCHIO

FLORENCE



FOUNTAIN OF MONTORSOLI

MESSINA

of Italian sculpture. Its bas-reliefs (which unfortunately cannot be clearly seen in any reproduction of the whole) represent the Christian Virtues and

was nicknamed "Jacopo of the Fountain." The original bas-reliefs, which were becoming badly weathered, were recently removed by the authorities to



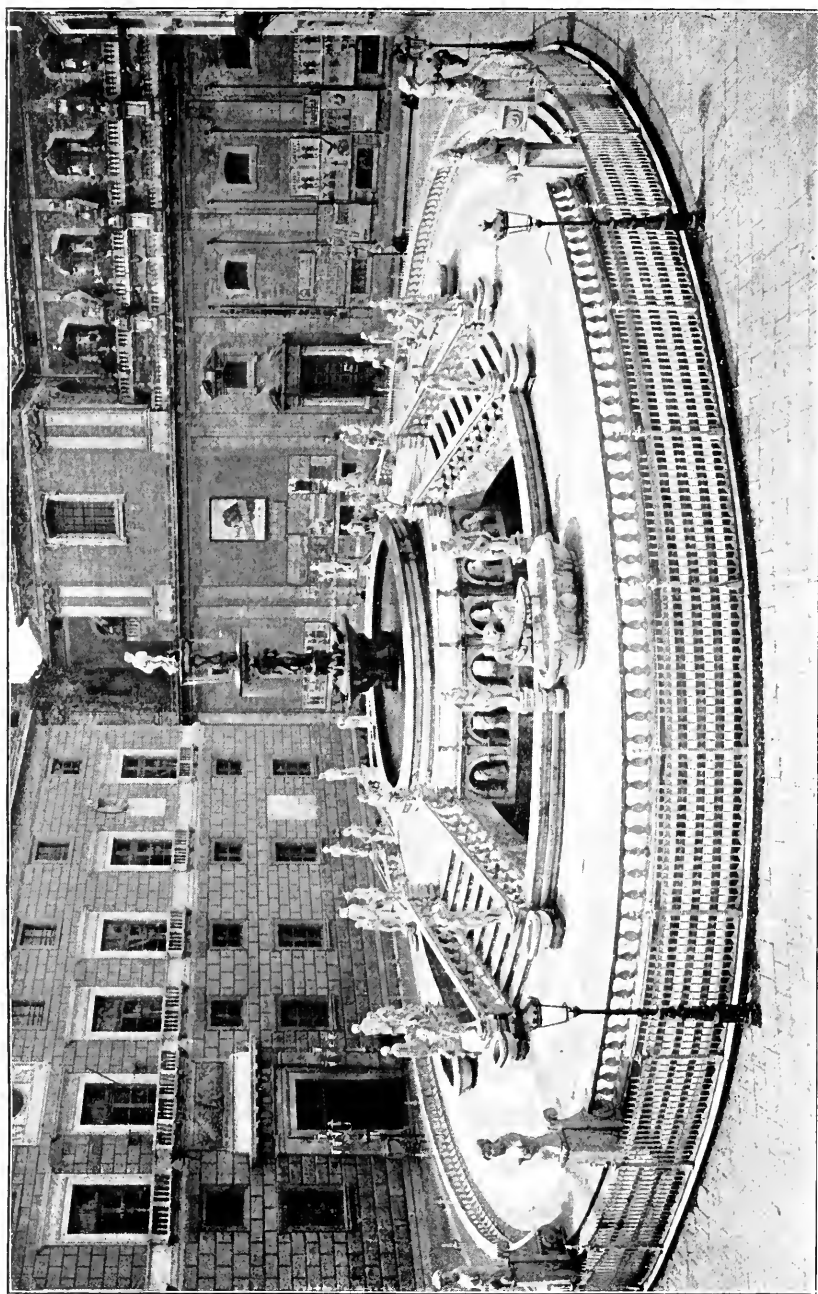
FOUNTAIN OF NEPTUNE

BOLOGNA

scenes from the Old Testament, and were executed by Jacopo della Quercia, assisted by other Sienese sculptors, between 1409 and 1419. The fountain was so highly esteemed that its designer

safe keeping under shelter, and careful reproductions have been substituted in the fountain itself.

The fountain at Cesena, well massed and making a particularly effective



GREAT FOUNTAIN, PIAZZA PRETORIA

silhouette, in spite of its ornateness, was constructed in the sixteenth century by Francesco Massini.

The most sumptuous of all the fountains by Bernini—that eminent builder of fountains—is that of the Four Rivers, at Rome. This majestic composition, from which rises a pyramid (not included in the illustration) shows, seated on a group of cunningly handled rocks, four gods, representing rivers of the four quarters of the globe.

A simple but very effective fountain behind the Pitti Palace, Florence, adorns one end of the amphitheater used for public festivities, and beyond can be seen the rising terraces of the Boboli Gardens.

The exquisitely-graceful fountain in the courtyard of the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, was designed by Vasari; but the beautiful little figure of the cupid holding a dolphin which surmounts it is by Verrocchio. This figure was not originally made for the fountain; but when the Palazzo Vecchio was renovated for the wedding of Joanna of Austria and Francesco dei Medici, the statue was taken from the garden of Lorenzo the Magnificent, which it then adorned, and placed here.

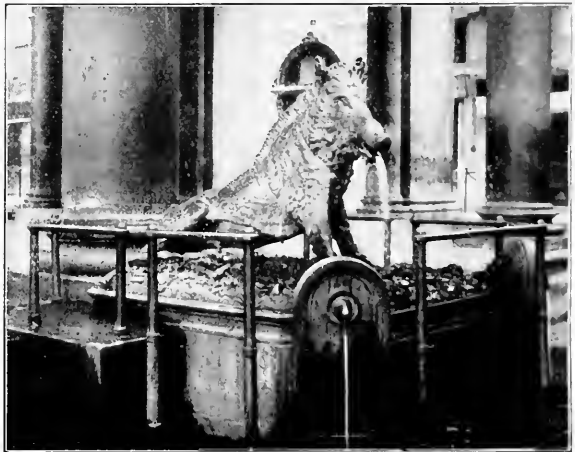
Rather over-ornate in character and overladen with allegorical figures and bas-reliefs, the Fountain of Montorsoli at Messina is nevertheless light and effective in general aspect. It was executed between 1547 and 1551.

The Fountain of Neptune at Bologna was designed by a painter, Tommaso Lauretti, but owes its chief celebrity to the very dignified statue of Neptune which surmounts it. This statue was executed by Giovanni da Bologna, plainly working under the influence of Michelangelo, and is considered his masterpiece.

The imposing fountain in the Piazza Pretoria, Palermo, was originally designed for the villa of the Viceroy Garcia da Toledo, and is the joint work of many artists, among them Naccherino, who was a pupil of Giovanni da Bologna.

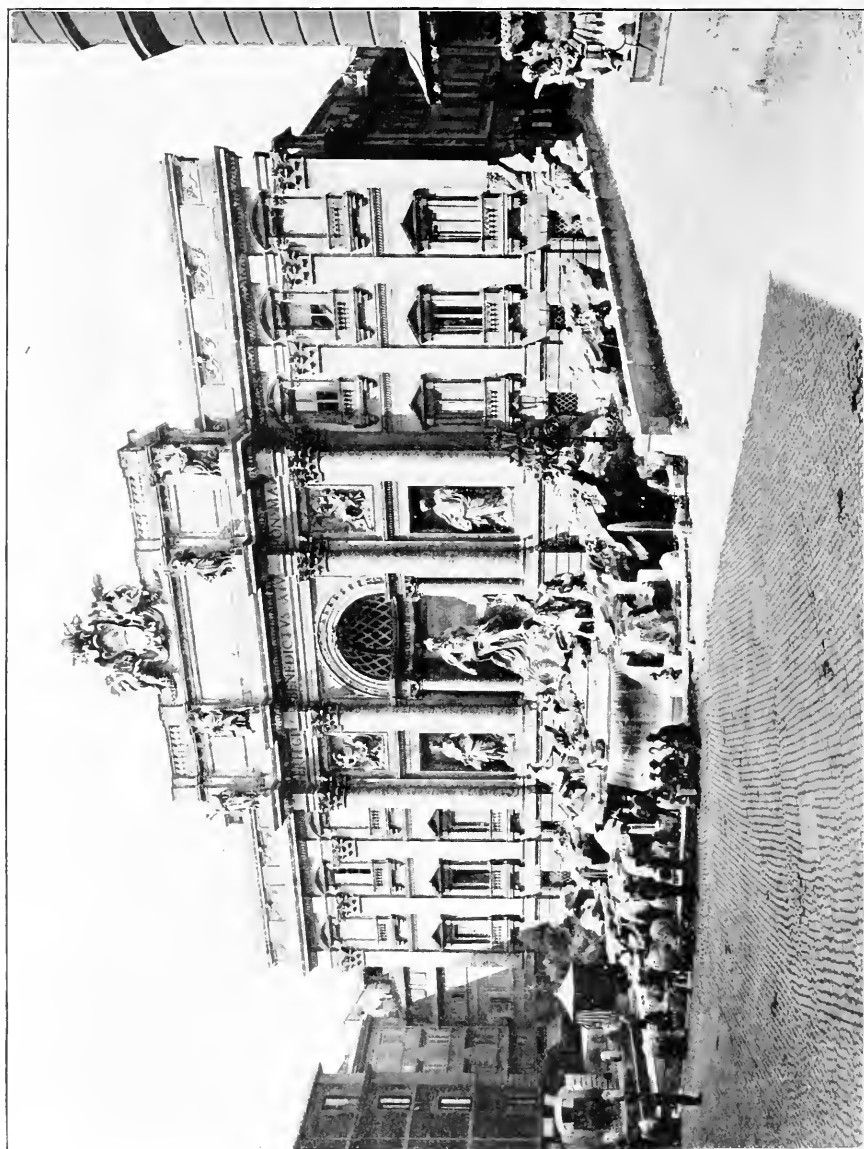
The Fountain of the Mercato Nuovo in Florence, consists of an excellent copy, by Pietro Tacca, of an antique bronze, now in the Uffizi Gallery, representing a reclining boar.

The Fountain of Trevi in Rome, marks the termination of an ancient Roman aqueduct. The water, celebrated for its purity, is conducted by a subterranean channel, fourteen miles long, built by the Emperor Agrippa in 19 B.C., to supply his baths. In 1453 Pope Nicholas V. increased the water supply (which now yields above thirteen million cubic feet daily) by conducting hither the main stream of the aqueduct instead of a branch of it, and the fountain then exchanged its ancient name of "Aqua Virgo"—derived from a tradition that the spring was discovered by a maiden—for that of "Trevi," from its three outlets. The water apparently springs from the elaborate architectural façade that forms one of the walls of the Palazzo Poli. In the central niche is Neptune, flanked by statues of Health



FOUNTAIN, MERCATO NUOVO

FLORENCE



FONTAINE DE LA VIERGE



FOUNTAIN OF THE TRITON ROME

and Fertility. The design of the present fountain, which was completed in 1762, was long supposed to be by Salvi, an otherwise unknown artist, but recently a

design by Bernini has been found from which Salvi evidently closely copied. In spite of the great celebrity of the Trevi Fountain and the undoubted magnificence of its general aspect, it lacks unity of effect, and is overloaded and over-ornate. This is the fountain into the basin of which sentimental travelers throw a coin, that their future return to Rome may be assured.

Perhaps the most wholly satisfactory, and yet the most modest fountain which Bernini has left us is the Fountain of the Triton, named from its figure of a triton borne upon a dolphin and blowing his horn into the heavens.

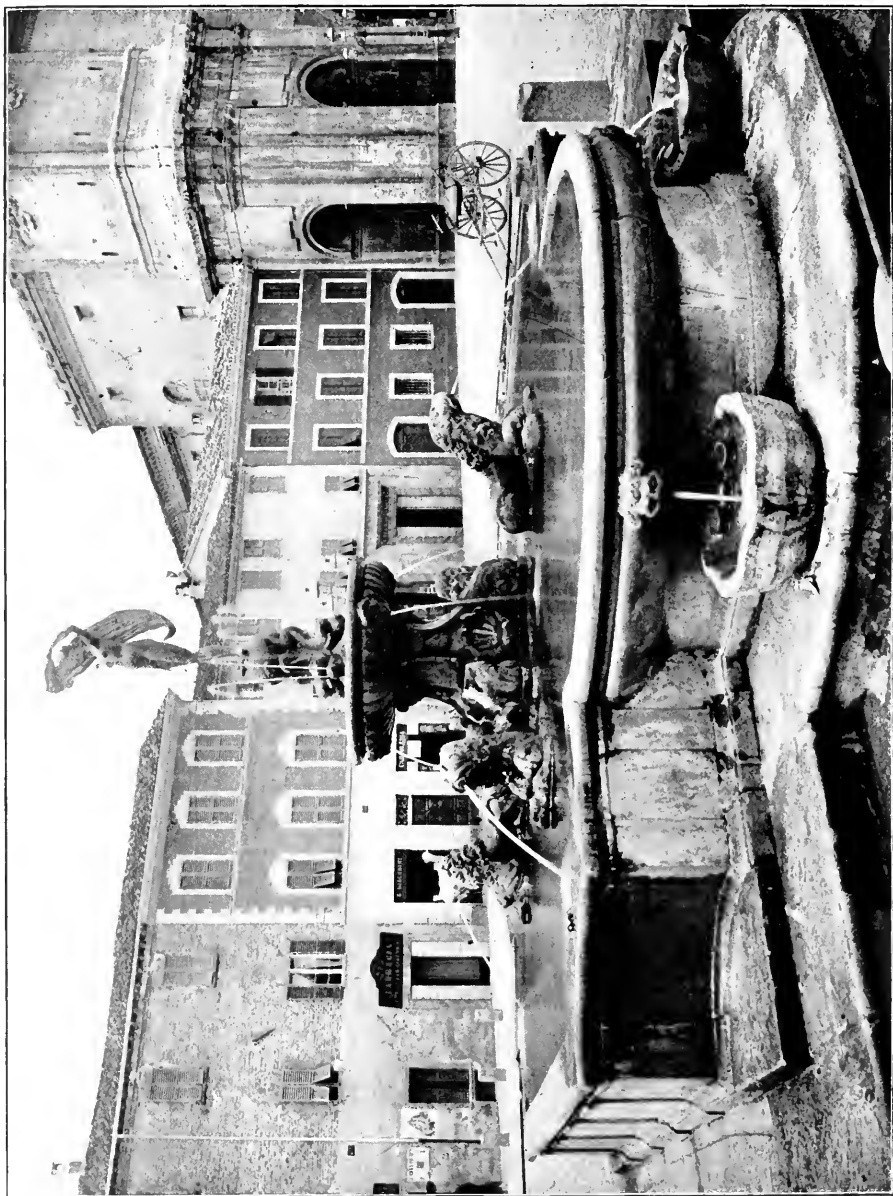
The little fountain embellished with bronze figures in the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele at Faenza dates from 1621.

The town of Fano was founded as "Fanum Fortunæ" by the Romans, who erected there a temple to Fortune. This fact is commemorated by an unusually graceful fountain surmounted by a figure of the goddess. The fountain proper was finished about 1576; the statue is of more recent origin.



FOUNTAIN, PIAZZA VITTORIO EMANUELE

FAENZA



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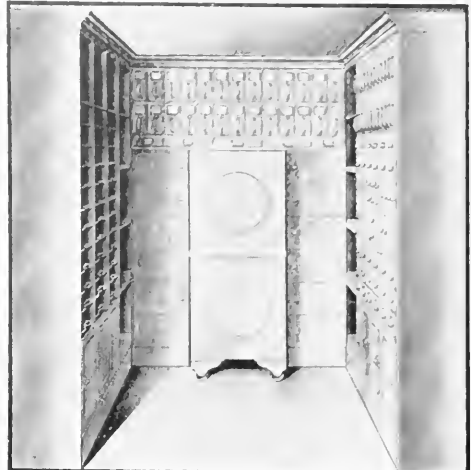
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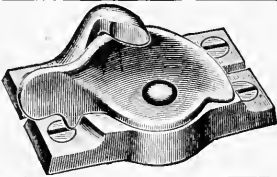


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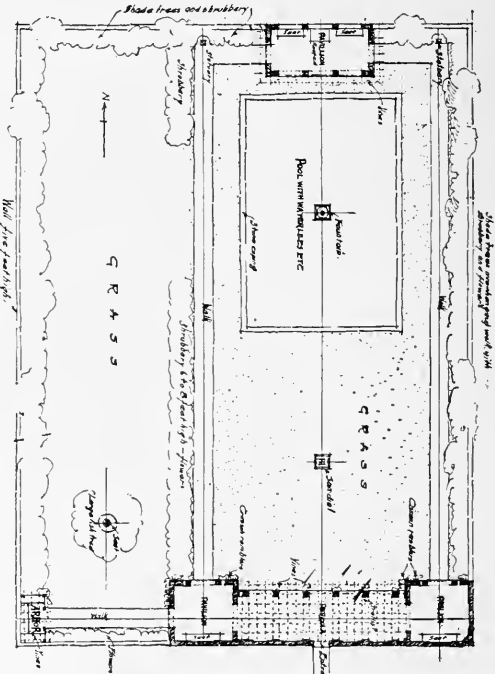


### BROCHURE SERIES COMPETITION AA

## A Plan for a Formal Garden

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AWARD

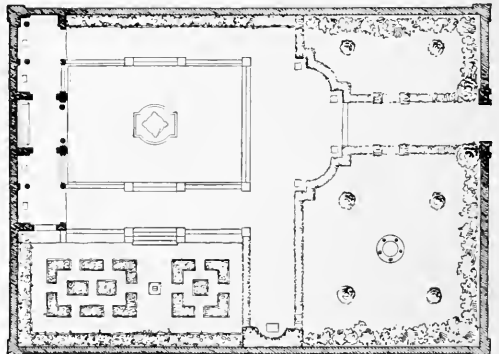
The requirements in this Competition called for a scale plan for a formal garden on a rectangular plot of given size, which should contain a rectangular water-basin, also of given



First Prize Design, by Mr. Alfred Cass, New York City

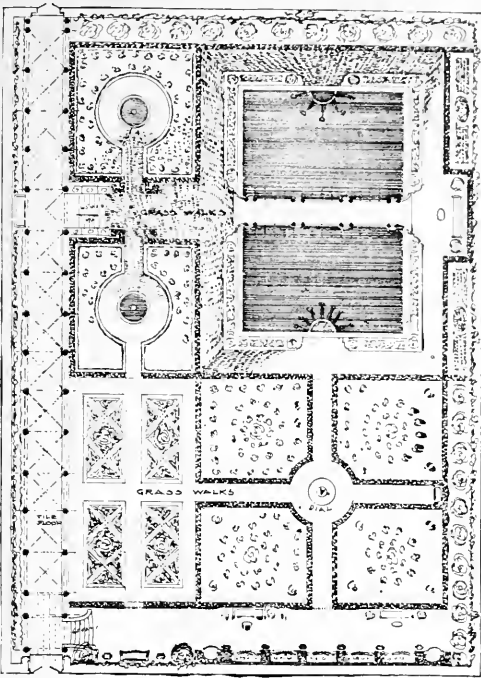
size, and in a stipulated position; the whole to be surrounded by a five-foot brick wall.

The conditions of the Competition were purposely so framed as to give the designer



Mention

"Finis"



Second Prize Design, by Mr. R. I. Swezey, New York City

liberty to assume such surroundings, relation to the owner's house, and degree of elaboration as he chose. In consequence the judges were obliged to establish a separate standard for every individual drawing, and estimate the possibilities of its success or failure when worked out. It may easily be imagined that this was no easy task when so much might depend upon the way the indications of the plan should be practically executed.

As a "formal" garden was stipulated, the problem was primarily in the choice, disposition and proportion of the architectural features; secondarily, one of planting and the use of materials. The rectangularity of plot and basin made it manifestly desirable to treat the design upon axial lines.

Many drawings were submitted, a number of them of quite exceptional excellence and ingenuity. Indeed it was remarkable how many satisfactory solutions of quite different characters were devised.

The first prize design, submitted by Mr. Alfred Cass of New York City, seemed to the judges upon the whole the simplest and most straightforward of the better solutions. By dividing the garden into two distinct portions, and placing entrance, pergolas and pavilions at the ends of the long axes of the basin, it makes the most of the longest dimension of the garden, and disposes the features where they will be effective from any point of view.

The second prize design, by Mr. R. I. Swezey, New York City, is much more ambitious in every way. The long, raised, pergola-covered walk, with an entrance at either end, and the separation of the enclosure into two distinct portions by paths and hedges is a skilful means of overcoming the difficulty caused by the location of the pool. The small scale resulting from this arrangement is well preserved throughout, and the details, such as the alley across the south end with its herme and trimmed hedges, and the little wistaria-covered bridge across the pool, suggest fascinating possibilities.

Of the other designs it is impossible to speak individually. Their shortcomings mainly arise from the disregard of qualities which have been especially commended in the two prize drawings. In addition to those repro-

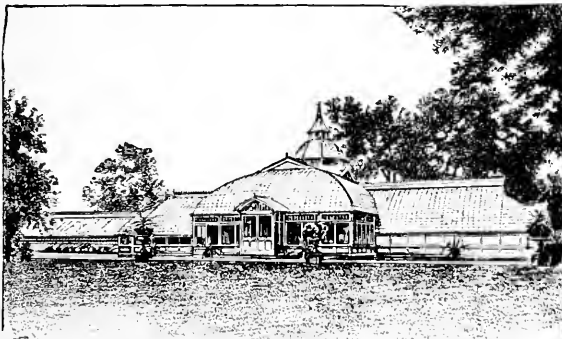
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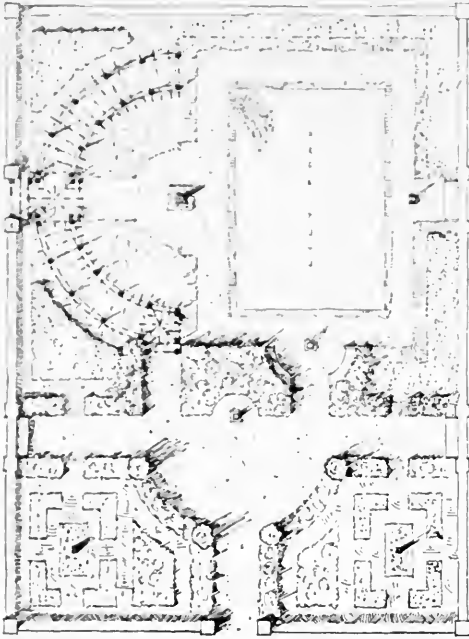
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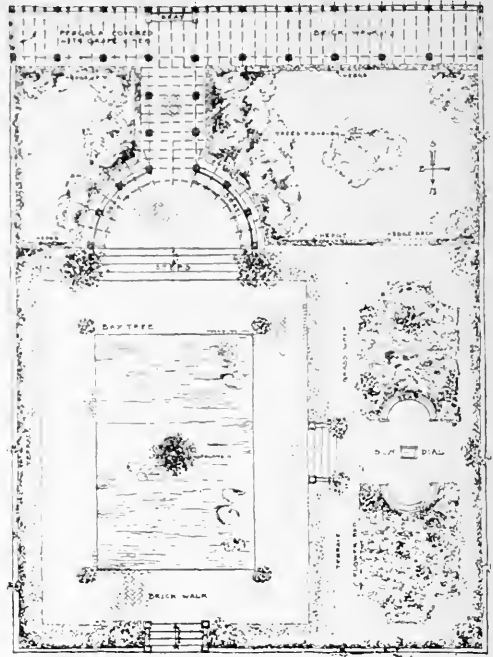
# THE BROCHURE SERIES



Mention

"Spade and Trowel"

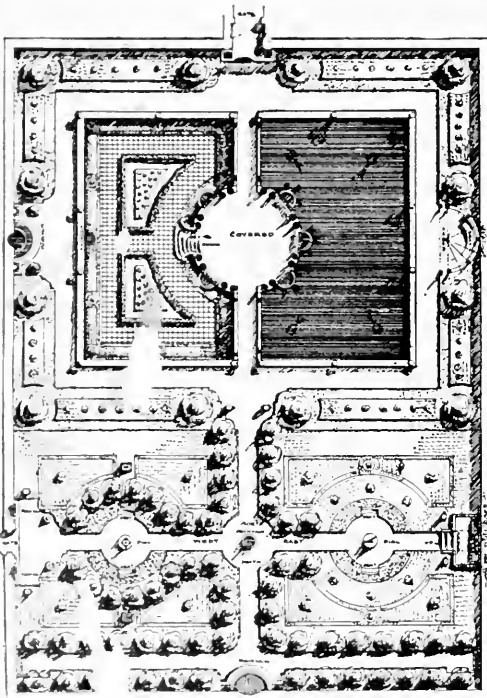
duced, the following plans seem especially worthy of mention: "Opus I," "Cascade," "Alpha," "Devon," "Squire," "Le Jardin-



Mention

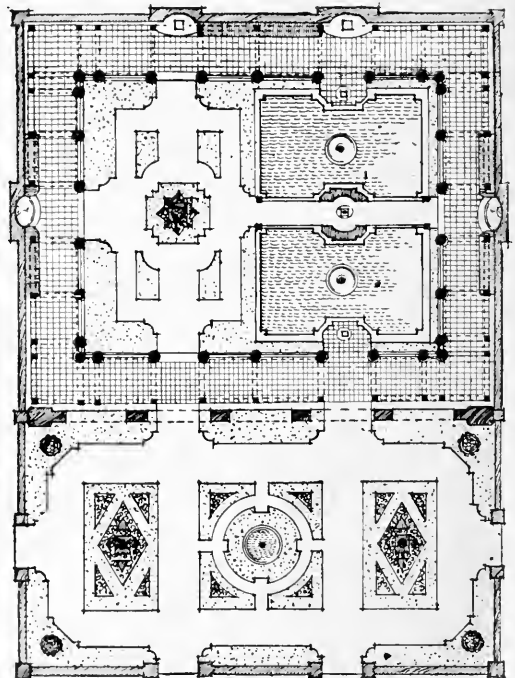
"Rek"

nier," "Water Temple," "Hawthorn," "Red Rose Garden," "Aperçu," "Giardiniere," "Cardinal Points."



Mention

"Tortoi"



Mention

"Axes"

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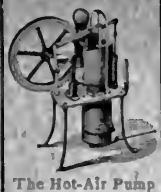
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